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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

Director Keith Creagh Testimony

Joint Select Committee on the Flint Water Public Health Emergency

April 25, 2016

Thank you Chairman Stamas and Committee members for providing the opportunity to testify before you today. I am Keith Creagh, and on January 4, 2016, I was appointed to be the Interim Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). I appreciate the work of this Committee, as well as that of others, and look forward to making the real changes that will make a difference for the citizens of the State of Michigan.

Since becoming Interim Director, I strengthened the organizational structure and protocols at the MDEQ. The Office of Drinking Water needed additional support not only to address the Flint water emergency, but also to monitor the 1,300 community water supplies across the State. One of my first changes was to establish an interagency command structure with expertise from other divisions and agencies.

Talented individuals from other divisions in MDEQ and Michigan Department of Natural Resources were brought in to respond to the water emergency in Flint. Changes also included establishing a field office in Flint, mapping service lines, forming the sentinel and high lead level response teams that are in the neighborhoods, and setting up an emergency command center within the Department. I have appreciated the legislative

support to date. I want to assure you, I will continue to be thoughtful in our request for additional staff and examining the needs that exist.

I have also encouraged staff to bring in outside experts to provide additional knowledge and perspectives to complex issues. Just last week in Representative Jeff Irwin's district, I encouraged experts from University of Michigan and the community to provide input on our toxics modeling which will impact how we respond to groundwater contamination. While the MDEQ is filled with extremely dedicated and talented individuals, engaging others, with independent perspectives, is important.

I have improved our relationship with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5. I have weekly calls with the Acting Regional Administrator Bob Kaplan, and MDEQ staff meet frequently with EPA staff. Let me be clear- a strong relationship does not mean that MDEQ and EPA will agree on all issues going forward. But I demand that our staff have open dialogue and that we strive to understand each agencies' position, especially if there is a disagreement. Throughout our discussions, the protection of the public health is central to our outcomes.

With regard to the City of Flint (City), we will ensure that the data which EPA, MDEQ and outside experts review is the best we can gather and that the interpretations of the data are shared. For example, after a meeting in early April, we presented a joint message to the Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee (FWICC) that (1) the drinking water system is recovering but unstable, (2) Flint residents can safely drink

filtered water and (3) a systematic flushing of the entire system is needed. The data indicates that the water quality is improving, but unstable, and the protective coating on the pipes is being restored but that water needs to start moving through the system to remove particulate lead and circulate the corrosion protection. Agreement amongst the experts on the data and status of the water was an important step in addressing the emergency and providing answers with one voice to the community.

As you are aware, Governor Snyder established the Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee through an Executive Order. It is comprised of city, county, and state officials, private entities, and outside experts such as Dr. Marc Edwards and Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha. The FWICC meets weekly to discuss and publicly share information, coordinate monitoring and sampling and assure alignment of efforts. The overall objective of the FWICC is to connect all of the resources available to assist the people of Flint and to mitigate the impact of lead exposure to the community.

In addition to the work of the FWICC, the MDEQ has established a sentinel water testing program, through which over 600 residences sampled their water every two weeks to guide decision makers on water quality and safety decisions. The results from the most recent sentinel round of sampling show that over 93% of the households have results at or below 15 parts per billion of lead.

One goal of the FWICC and the MDEQ is to support the City of Flint as it improves its water treatment system. We are supporting that effort in many ways including:

- Funding the proof of concept for lead line removals (ROWE's first 30 of the FAST Start Initiative)
- Assisting in an assessment of the water plant
- Exploring industry participation programs such as "Partnership for Safe Water"
- Seeking national expertise through the American Water Works Association
- Coordinating the updating of the City's reliability study and developing an asset management plan
- Assisting in the calibration of the City's hydraulic model
- Flushing and sampling water systems at schools and licensed child day care and adult care facilities
- Conducting lead line investigations
- Responding to high lead and high copper sample results within 48 hours (above 150 ppb) or 7 days (above 100 ppb)
- Analyzing over 20,000 drinking water samples from Flint residences

In the end, the decisions and protocols put into place to address the water emergency in Flint must be applied across the State. To accomplish that, the Governor is asking the Legislature to partner in the establishment of a Michigan Lead and Copper Rule. We cannot wait for the federal government to update its federal Lead and Copper Rule.

Under the Governor's proposal we would:

- Be the first state in the nation to establish a household action level of 40 ppb. Exceedance of the levels will provide access to full blood lead testing for all

household members, a diagnosis of the household water system and trigger heightened notice and education on the impacts of lead.

- Reduce the public water supply action threshold from 15 to 10 ppb
- Add sampling selection criteria, including schools and adult care facilities to the list of sites to be annually tested
- Move to annual sampling instead of every three years
- Require all public water supplies to create a service line inventory and replacement plan, and
- Ban partial service line replacements

Through the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, we are also working on a coordinated long term strategic investment in water infrastructure. It is anticipated that those recommendations will be presented to the Governor and Legislature this November.

Even though we are making progress I recognize that we have a long way to go in rebuilding trust and confidence with the citizens of City of Flint. We will continue our collaborative efforts to provide a long term solution to this water emergency.